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The Rundle Lodge Story

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The Challenge:

Although Rundle Lodge is only a few years old, the work there has endeared itself not only to those who are benefiting directly, but to the citizens at large who are more and more becoming acquainted with this service to elderly people.

When Calgary was a younger city, populated to a large extent with younger people, when houses were large enough to accommodate grandparents as well, and when medical science had only limited success in prolonging life, the problem of care for older people was not too great.

No one has to be convinced that the picture has changed. Practically every one of the conditions affecting an aging population has changed to the point where it is now a pressing social problem. It may be surprising to many to learn that the average age of the 52 guests in Rundle Lodge is 83, and these are people who are on their feet, and in reasonably good health.



THE CONCERT AUDIENCE — ANTICIPATION



THE OLD HYMNS ARE THE BEST

The Work of Many Hands:

If one were to name all who had a hand in this project since its inception, the list would snowball into the thousands. Naturally, those who have taken an intimate and active part during this period have had the larger share, but Rundle Lodge as it is today would have been impossible had it not been for the voluntary efforts of individuals and groups. Many have made donations of money, large and small, some have given equipment; from near and far there were those who gave encouragement with prayerful good wishes — where could one stop? Hence the absence of names in these pages.

A Brief History:

Every problem of human need is on the conscience of Christian people. In recent years the rising pressure of concern for the welfare of elderly people resulted in the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church, deciding to establish a number of homes for senior citizens in Canada where the need was greatest.

In 1952 the Calgary Presbytery appointed a steering committee, to investigate the possibilities of such a home in this city. Only a few thousand dollars was available, so it was not feasible to consider either new construction, or the purchase of a suitable property.



THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BREW GOOD TEA

The committee, therefore, felt deep gratitude in 1953, when the opportunity came to get under way. With the expansion of new hospital facilities, the City of Calgary generously made available the old hospital buildings, located in another area, to serve the needs of elderly people.

The period of preparation which followed was intensive. Even before the renovations were completed it was necessary to admit a number of guests who desired immediate accommodation. The project was something of an innovation, so diversified in its requirements that to properly meet the challenge much specialized direction was needed. A Board of Directors was selected, representative of the various fields required in preparing and operating such an establishment. Even today, most of the Directors are chosen with a view to their making an informed contribution to some particular phase of the work of the Home.

On March 5th, 1954 the official opening took place, and gradually the number of guests began to increase. It took some time for the Home to be filled to capacity, the need existed but the advantages which Rundle Lodge had to offer were not too well known. In more recent times every space has been occupied with a considerable list waiting for admission.



THE BAZAAR FACTORY

During the whole period of its brief history, continual improvements to the Home have been undertaken as money became available. Being an older property a good deal of repairs and maintenance has been necessary. Fortunately a number of Calgary firms were most generous in providing men and material with little or no profit, and in a few cases an outright donation.

One by one problems have been resolved. The need for the guests to be exposed to the weather in going from one building to another became unnecessary with the erection of heated passageways. The large dining room had to serve for all assembly purposes as well, which was a distinct handicap. However, one or two legacies together with funds from group and individual efforts, made possible the erection of a beautiful hall. This building completed in January 1957 is serving most effectively as a centre for worship, concerts and recreation.

Life at Rundle Lodge:

A home for elderly people should be just that — a home. There has to be much more than good food and comfortable living quarters, important though these things are. Space would never permit a complete list of the activities, but life never gets dull and time passes



"IT'S YOUR MOVE!"

quickly. A number of telephones have been installed so that the guests will not feel separated from relatives and friends. Many visitors call, usually for one guest in particular, but always with a cheery word for any others who are around.

Entertainment is never lacking. Plenty of radios are available, and two television sets are located so that a number may watch together. Frequently a group of around twenty gather in the lounge to listen to the fine recordings donated or loaned. Every week contains one or two events in evening entertainment, concerts, movies, travelogues, etc. On occasions, choirs from various churches come to give an hour of their talents.

The dining room also recognizes festive occasions. One such feature is the monthly birthday party where all guests who had a birthday during the month are honored at this celebration. Church groups provide gifts for these occasions and also at Christmas.

Although a number of the guests are not able now to do much with their hands, others enjoy a considerable amount of activity. In the growing season one may see some of the men at work among the flowers, and in the vegetable garden. Many of the ladies keep busy with the needles, and the work of their hands find a ready sale at the "Happy Hearts Bazaar" held annually, the proceeds of which makes possible some feature of improvement in the Home.



"THE FELLOWSHIP OF KINDRED MINDS IS LIKE TO THAT ABOVE"

A substantial library fills the need for book lovers, and sufficient copies of the daily papers keep everyone well informed on events, at home and abroad. Life at Rundle Lodge is never boring. There are plenty of activities and the days are rounded out in companionship with those of their own age group.

The Spiritual Side:

Although Rundle Lodge is operated by the United Church, admission to the home is by no means restricted to those of that denomination. The doors are always open to those who are in need of the warmth of a Christian home. The records show in addition to those of the United Church, some Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, and over a dozen other churches. There are even a few who have never affiliated with any church, but all are welcome in the fellowship of this home.

Not every home for older people makes provision for the spiritual as well as the physical. Many who have made a study of the problems connected with advanced years, take the view that the need for sympathetic love, the opportunity for worship and frequent contact with a spiritual advisor, is greater in many cases than the physical needs.

On Sundays a number of the guests attend the church of their choice, but those who are unable to make the effort are not denied the



GOOD TO THE LAST BITE

opportunity for worship. The resident Chaplain arranges a weeknight service of worship, at which various denominations are represented by ministers speaking at these services. At regular intervals communion services are held. Although attendance is entirely voluntary, it is an interesting fact that practically everyone is present.

There is the inescapable sorrow when a vacant chair at the table occurs. It is then when the Chaplain's words of comfort, and the Christian hope of reunion, eases the load from many hearts.

The Dinner Bell:

The guests are assembled at the tables in the dining room, the matron rings a little bell for silence, the Chaplain asks a blessing, and the food is served. There is nothing unusual about that procedure, but the meals in Rundle Lodge are much above the standard of so called 'institutional food'. This is not an institution but a home, and the expert cooks get the home cooked flavor on to the plates.

The purchase of bargain food products is avoided. Rather, the emphasis is on appetising, easily digested food, balanced to give the maximum benefit in the basic food elements necessary for good health. Scrupulously clean and efficient handling brings a freshness and flavor to the table, which stimulates even an indifferent appetite.



AT THE END OF THE DAY

Breakfast is at 8:30 a.m. when all are at the table, properly groomed and dressed. The dinner is served at noon, to avoid a heavy meal in the evening, as most of the guests like to retire early. Supper at 5:30 is a lighter meal and facilities are available for those who wish a hot or cold snack at bedtime.

Bedtime:

Most older people require a good deal of rest. For this reason particular attention is paid to the comfort of the beds. It is necessary to keep the buildings quite warm at all times, so that even in cold weather extra blankets are seldom required. Although necessary furniture is provided in the rooms, it is generally possible to permit the guests to have one or two personal things around, as far as space will permit. Adequate windows give a bright appearance to the rooms, and suitable lighting prevents eye strain.

Everything possible is done for the comfort of the guests. It is their home, and it is indeed rare for anyone to express a wish they could be elsewhere.



THEIR WORK IS NEVER DONE

The Balance Sheet:

It is the policy of the United Church to operate these homes with the cost to the guests as near pension level as possible. However, no one has even been denied admission because of a financial problem. Fortunately with some assistance from groups and individuals, it has been possible to operate the home within the ability of the guests to pay. Excellent management has resulted in the monthly income and expenditures coming within a few dollars - one way or the other. Should economic conditions change to the point where a profit was evident, then the rates to the guests would have to be reduced accordingly.

It naturally follows that all major improvements and additions are dependent on donations and gifts of various kinds. Many church groups make regular contributions, a much greater number of individuals have given from time to time and some do so annually. Those who remembered the work of Rundle Lodge in their Wills have rendered invaluable service. Particularly in the earlier stages of development, some financial assistance was given from the headquarters of the United Church.



THE BUSIEST TIME OF THE DAY

Statistics are often uninteresting, but here are a few which tell a story otherwise hard to describe.

To date we have invested in improvements (including the

new guest lounge) about \$40,000.00

The monthly revenue from guests averages (1959) \$3,100.00

The monthly operating expenditure (1959) \$3,125.00

According to the type of accommodation for the guests, the rates are \$55.00, \$60.00 and \$70.00 which includes facilities for personal laundry

Donations for capital improvements (1959) \$2,300.00

Since its inception Rundle Lodge has served well over a hundred elderly people.



EATING AGAIN



IN A TOUGH SPOT

What of the Future:

It is difficult at the present to predict what the demands of the future will be. No doubt a great part of the needs of our senior citizens will be provided under the ever expanding program of social service by some level of government. Much will depend on the demand for the kind of service which only the church can render. If such demand is sufficient, then the course to follow is clear — it may mean expansion with new construction, or it may call for other types of service to the ever increasing numbers of an aging population.

In any event there is a future. How well this can be served depends on the continued interest, the work, the prayers, and the money of all who seek to translate Christian teaching into action.

For further information address your enquiries to:

**The Matron,
Bundie Lodge,
12th Ave. and 6th St. S.E.,
Calgary, Alberta**

